



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

Megan Durham (202) 343-4131

WATERFOWL HUNTING RESTRICTIONS MAY NEED TO BE CONTINUED,  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SAYS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering keeping last year's waterfowl hunting restrictions in place for the upcoming fall season, according to a notice published in the March 27, 1989, Federal Register.

Early results of waterfowl harvest studies confirm that duck production was very poor last year, as predicted. Although complete harvest information will not be available until summer, preliminary analysis of wings submitted by hunters indicates that mallard and pintail populations contained less than one young for each adult bird, whereas in years of good production the young outnumber the adults. Pintail production was down dramatically, with only one young for every two adults. Wood duck production also declined, reflecting the effects of drought in the southeast.

The current waterfowl situation underscores the importance of long-term efforts to conserve and enhance waterfowl habitat through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The North

(over)

American Plan is a joint effort between the United States and Canada to preserve and restore key waterfowl habitats, and is considered particularly crucial now because widespread drought has accelerated habitat loss, particularly in Canada. Many areas important to breeding ducks have been permanently affected. Several years of good weather conditions will be required before remaining habitat areas can recover, revegetate, and produce ducks.

Because a large harvest on populations with poor production is not in the best interest of waterfowl or the future of waterfowl hunting, the Fish and Wildlife Service is tentatively proposing to continue restrictive hunting regulations in 1989, including the suspension of the September teal season, extra teal and scaup options, and the point system. Proposals for outside season dates, bag limits, and season length will be deferred until results of nesting, production, and harvest surveys become available later this year.

The Service is also proposing to open shooting hours at sunrise and close them at sunset for all migratory birds, with two exceptions: (1) shooting hours will begin one-half hour before sunrise for doves and pigeons, and (2) migratory bird hunters may shoot one-half hour before sunrise prior to the earliest duck season opening date (including sea ducks) and after the latest duck season closing date.

These proposals are contained in the March 27, 1989 Federal Register. This document also contains details of proposed regulations for early migratory bird hunting seasons (those opening before October 1). A public hearing on early season regulations, including those for Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, will be held June 22, 1989, at 9 a.m. at a location to be named later. A public hearing on late season regulations will be held August 3 at 9 a.m. Public comments on proposed early season regulations will be accepted through July 21 and for late season regulations through August 28 and should be submitted to the Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.